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Arab States: The situation remains tense, but is still generally under control.

President Hilu continues his search for the least painful way out of the present crisis. He met yesterday with a variety of local dignitaries and representatives of other Arab states, but no solutions have yet emerged.

The various political factions in Lebanon appear to have been caught off guard and their reaction has been mixed. Some Muslim elements have reportedly demanded that the government cooperate with the fedayeen and grant them full freedom of action, but they have also stressed the need for calm and national unity. Arab nationalists have issued a call for a general strike today, probably timed to coincide with noon prayers. The government has announced an indefinite curfew in Beirut and other large cities, intended to reduce the possibility of demonstrations.

An earlier order for security forces to disarm the occupants of Palestinian refugee camps was later rescinded by President Hilu, apparently after being pressed by the Egyptian ambassador in Beirut. Nevertheless, there were some incidents between security forces and refugees in camps in or near Beirut, with some casualties on both sides.

There have been no reports of further armed incursions from Syria across the Lebanese border. In Syria itself, large anti-Lebanese, anti-Husayn, and anti-US demonstrations took place yesterday.

In Jordan, anti-Lebanese demonstrations continued in Amman.



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[In Israel, meanwhile, emotions are running high over the recent bombings of apartment houses in Haifa. Although Prime Minister Meir characterized the perpetrators as Arab infiltrators, senior cabinet officials reportedly believe the bombings are the work of Israeli Arabs. The some 286,000 Arabs in Israel proper have recently demonstrated increasingly pro-fedayeen views.

The Soviets have not yet commented, but Moscow is probably not unhappy over the turn of events. On 20 October, Soviet Politburo member Shelepin had taken the unprecedented step of publicly pledging unspecified Soviet support for the fedayeen.

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West Germany - Poland: Chancellor Brandt will have difficulty meeting Poland's terms for better relations.

The current trade talks are moving very slowly and may soon be recessed to give each side additional time to clarify its position, according to West German officials. Thus far, the Poles have done little more than present a general catalog of their maximum desires. For their part, the Germans have been at pains to explain why such demands as elimination of quotas, major tariff cuts, and special tax advantages are unrealistic in view of Bonn's existing international and domestic commitments. They have also boggled over Polish hopes for generous credits, although Bonn may eventually be willing to accommodate the Poles somewhat on this issue.

Although Brandt has expressed a strong desire to improve relations, the approach of his government to the Oder-Neisse border question--the major problem in German-Polish relations--remains unclear.

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[redacted] the Poles still want a formal agreement with Bonn on the border as the price for putting relations on a normal basis. There is strong sentiment in both coalition parties favoring immediate recognition of the border, but Brandt is emphasizing his desire for continuity in foreign policy. He will probably elect to move cautiously rather than risk stirring up a storm of protest from the opposition Christian Democrats, and offending conservatives among his Free Democratic coalition partners.

Brandt may feel that he can go no further than offering to conclude a renunciation of force agreement with Poland that would contain an implicit West German acceptance of the border. [redacted]

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Yugoslavia: Belgrade University students, who rioted in 1968 against the government's treatment of the students' problems, now are dissatisfied with the scope of the first of many promised reforms.

Student participation in the election of university officials is the obvious issue. The authorities, however, are more concerned with the students' underlying challenge to the Communist Party's control over appointments to key positions.

Last July the Serbian assembly amended the law, thereby allowing faculties and students a free hand in university elections, but without specifically explaining how the elections would be conducted. The students want to participate directly in elections of all officials. The Belgrade University Council, however, adopted a complicated and indirect method of election. The students grudgingly accepted this method for the election of the rector and pro-rector but are holding out for direct elections for faculty deans and assistant deans.

Belgrade University, with a student body of over 13,000, will remain tense until the end of October when these elections are due to be over. At that time the students might become more active in their dissent if they feel the elections were rigged against their candidates. The authorities have been relatively lenient with the students since the June 1968 riots and are anxious to avoid another disturbance.

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Afghanistan: The recently elected parliament may be even more conservative and parochial than its predecessor.

In this second election of King Zahir's "experiment in democracy," local, often ultraconservative candidates were vigorously pushed by provincial leaders who succeeded in getting out a heavy rural vote. Many educated and liberal candidates were defeated, largely because the government did not intervene in their behalf as it had in 1965 and because many educated city dwellers did not vote. In most races, family connections, tribal ties, and financial resources far outweighed ideology and political affiliation.

Legislators with party ties are a very small minority. The largest party representation consists of a small group of conservatives and royalists, but even they are not expected to be subject to party discipline. The new parliament's political line-up gives only two seats to avowed pro-Communists, leaving the far left weaker than before.

In any case, parliament will continue to be a malleable body whose performance depends as much on executive and royal guidance as upon its own initiative. Strong executive leadership to push needed reform programs seems unlikely because the undynamic and indecisive Nur Ahmad Etemadi will probably again head the government. It remains to be seen if the King, who is still the pre-eminent power, will be more willing than in the past to exert his influence.



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NATO: The North Atlantic Assembly has come out strongly against any reduction in the military strength of the Alliance without a corresponding reduction by the Warsaw Pact.

Reacting to the prospect of a 50 percent reduction in Canada's forces in Europe next year and rumors of eventual US troop withdrawals, this session of NATO's parliament took the position that NATO's military posture should be maintained, not reduced, and that significant improvements in the quality of its forces should be undertaken.

The subject of possible US troop pullouts figured prominently in the Assembly discussions. This concern was given added weight by the speeches of several US delegates who noted mounting domestic pressures for reduced military commitments and called on the Allies to shoulder more of the NATO defense burden.

The British proposal for some sort of European defense group within NATO was received more warmly by the parliamentarians than it has been in the past by most Allied governments. The delegates resolved that interested European members of the Alliance should work for "practical measures of defense cooperation including the establishment of a European arms procurement agency...and the eventual establishment of an integrated European force."

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NOTE

Sweden: The new government is taking firm charge of the nation's foreign policy. According to a foreign ministry official, Sweden plans to complete action on the nuclear nonproliferation treaty by Christmas, thus reversing its long-time refusal to ratify before the US and USSR. Prime Minister Palme has also called a meeting next Tuesday of the national advisory council on foreign affairs to review the state of Swedish-US relations. Foreign Minister Nilsson and the parliamentary foreign affairs committee will report at this meeting; both have just completed separate conciliatory consultations with their opposite numbers in the US.

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